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EdTech Journal
A CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

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IT is with a bittersweet feeling that this will be my last official communication with our CETPA membership.

I retired from the Ventura County Office of Education on June 30, but have been honored to stay on as the CETPA president through the annual conference in Pasadena. I ask you to bear with me as I recount some of my reflections on my career and my time with the CETPA organization. This is just one of those things that happens as you get on in years.

For 19 of my 35 years in education, the California Educational Technology Professionals Association has been a critical part of my life, and I want to share what it has meant to me—both personally and professionally.

I remember attending my first CETPA conference in Palm Springs in 1998. I found that every session I attended was well-planned and so helpful with the challenges I was facing as a newly hired director of technology in the Hueneme School District. Having come from the classroom and incorporating a great deal of technology into my students’ curriculum and training scores of teachers in the 1980s and early 90s, it was a huge jump to begin to manage an enterprise environment.

I was challenged with WAN (T-1s) and LAN (token ring and AppleTalk) issues, SIS support, systems integration, Active Directory cleanup and design, establishing hardware specifications and procurement procedures, lab and teacher facilities, furniture design and classroom pedagogy. The amazing thing was this CETPA conference was so perfectly appropriate to meet my needs that I knew I would need to become more engaged with this group of experts. I sat in on sessions by Warren Williams, Scott Sexsmith, Russ Brawn, Terrell Tucker, Greg Lindner and Darryl LaGace (to name a few) and found their sessions to be so helpful in guiding me in my challenges as a new director. The topics were relevant and timely, and I remember walking away from each one of them with materials, plans and contact information that would directly help me in completing my job in Hueneme. I also loved the one-day vendor show where I could speak directly to the vendors I was using or considering doing business with.

I made it a priority and commitment to attend the annual CETPA conferences. I began to reach out to many of these leaders and seek guidance and clarification on methods of implementation and recommendations for solutions. Along with the great information delivered at these conferences, I was very impressed with the professionalism and quality of the how the conference was conducted. The venues (Monterey, Indian Wells, Santa Barbara) were all top-notch destinations and I found the food (and beverages), handouts, swag, hospitality suites and events to be first class.

What I began to realize was—that while all of the conference surroundings were great—it was really the community of professionals and friends that I was developing were the true take away. Many of these relationships were going to sustain me in my career and life. We began to rely on each other for procedures, policies, RFPs, job descriptions, helpful tips and recommendations for products and vendor partners. None of us have the time to do all of the research by ourselves. Having a community of friends and professionals would not only make our jobs easier, but it would make it more fulfilling. It also helped to simply have colleagues and friends that you could commiserate with. Tell me that “Friday Funnies” on the EdTech list did not start for a good reason.

I was then nominated to the board when I accepted the job to move to the Ventura County Office of Education in 2005. Thanks Judy Acosta and Terrell Tucker! Participating on the board was a whole different level of commitment. I was clearly the newbie amidst all of these giants who I had so admired. That happened to be the year the board made, perhaps, the most significant change—the of hiring our Executive Director Andrea Bennett. Prior to this, all of the conference work was done by board members. We truly were a working board with lots of evening and weekend work to pull off the annual conference and other events.

Andrea immediately jumped into the role, bringing a level of organization and detail that took a huge load off of many of us. On top of that change, the board also began the CTO Mentor program. This continued on 7...
I will be forever grateful to this organization for the role it has played in my career, both personally and professionally. When I transition to full retirement in November, it will be so gratifying to know that my life-long friendships with so many of you will continue. You all can rest assured that our staff and board are in great hands and we have a group of leaders that will continue to advocate and serve for years to come.

While I was reflecting, I began to think of the very early days of my career in the early 80s, I decided to apply to a master’s in education program at UC Santa Barbara. The focus was in “Interactive Educational Technology.” This was a brand-new program and, in some ways, during that first cohort, we had the luxury of shaping the curriculum. When I wrote my letter of intent, I remember trying to incorporate the lessons I had learned in Greek philosophy at UC Santa Cruz as part of my rationale for admittance into the program. I cited the myth of Prometheus, who had provided the gift of fire to humans. In this case, I was equating the gift of fire to technology. Fire could provide great benefit to humanity in terms of warmth and energy, while at the same time when misused, it could be very destructive. The same holds true for technology.

As I was writing that letter, I was making the argument that if this program could help me understand the power of technology, I might be better able to utilize these technology tools or teach my students to utilize these tools. As I reflect on my 35 years in this career, I am sure that I was pretty naïve about my ability to understand and control technology. I do believe, however, that we, as technology professionals, have a responsibility to bring to the table—whether it be to our administrators, teachers, students, and community—a thoughtful review and insight as to the proper use of technology as a tool to achieve curricular goals and student achievement.

We need to be thoughtful and deliberate in our approach to technology. Yes, this can slow the process down, but it also can prevent some grave mistakes. How many of us have been forced to rush into a new technology knowing there were missing pieces such as policies, system integration, automation, infrastructure, data protection, privacy, budget or operational capacity only to have it blow up afterwards. These are lessons we need to share with each other and with our respective organizations. I immediately think of the new shiny things like iPads or social media. Many of us have been pressured into rolling out new technologies on unrealistic timelines. Without a testing environment, policy review, appropriate training and testimonials from our peers, these new technologies may likely backfire. Our community can help us have courage to slow down to go fast. That is one of the many benefits of our membership. We share stories and best practices with each other in order to avoid the pitfalls and implement the best technology solutions.

program, with more than 220 CTO graduates, has transformed our community. We have had 11 cohorts and each one has led to refinement, improvement and a new extended community of CETPA members. This is altogether evident when we host the annual CTO Mentor reception at the conference. Now with 18 regional groups established throughout the state, we are seeing our community growing stronger and larger.
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"Steve Carr has been an amazing mentor to all of us and, to me, in particular. His example is one of selflessness, courage, positivity and vision. And, his is a wide-angle vision that is responsive to the needs of our whole community—students, teachers, technologists, school agencies, vendors, CETPA's extraordinary staff, and even his fellow board members. We will miss him greatly and will carry forward his expansive vision in his honor."

~ STEVE THORNTON

Steve is still close with his family, including his three sons. He has already made a visit back east to spend time with some family after retiring on June 30.

His first "real" job was painting houses. That eventually allowed him to travel west. He went to UC Santa Cruz and majored in politics and philosophy (I know, right?) and earned his master's degree in education from UC Santa Barbara. At a recent Board of Directors' meeting, Steve was talking with Tim Landeck about his time in Santa Cruz. They came to realize that they lived in the same house at different times and knew a lot of the same people, but they don't remember meeting each other. What would have happened if those two had become friends way back then? It would have been epic, right?

Always athletic, Steve played ice hockey and football before taking up skiing and surfing. He is also a hiker and kayaker. He loves the outdoors and now he is able to fully enjoy the environment every day.

Steve began his career in education 35 years ago as an 8th grade history teacher. At the Hueneme School District, he taught teachers how to integrate technol-
ogy into their curriculum, not just for technology’s sake, but for true student learning. He became the senior director of educational technology and, after nine years, became the chief technology officer at Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE). VCOE has 20 school districts and serves more than 145,000 students.

Along the way, CETPA was lucky enough to elect Steve to its Board of Directors. His dedication is without question. There are many accomplishments we could list, some internal to the organizational health of the association and some that turned into major benefits for CETPA members and for California schools. Two of the biggest are CETPA and Microsoft Strategic Alliance (CAMSA) and the California Student Privacy Alliance (CSPA). Steve has led the way for both of these programs that save California schools hundreds of thousands of dollars in licensing fees and countless hours of paperwork.

Steve has been recognized with many awards including the prestigious 8th grade Religion Medal at Saint John and Paul School in New York. In addition, he has been recognized by ACSA and CoSN, and his department has won the County Office’s Halloween costume contest several times.

Steve will be on board as President until the conference. CETPA will then begin another new era and is ready for the challenges ahead. We have a strong Board of Directors and will have two new directors elected this November who will provide fresh ideas and new energy to the organization. Steve has laid a sturdy foundation for us to continue the great work we do to support the education community.

I am truly grateful to have had the privilege to work with Steve for so many years. He has been a trusted colleague and is a now true friend. Congratulations, Steve!

“A high quality Chief Technology Officer is a craft defined by good communication skills, vision, leadership, collaboration, technical abilities and the ability to make things happen. Stephen Carr is a shining example of a top-quality CTO and an excellent model for many of us to follow.”

~ TIM LANDECK

AN ATHLETE HIS WHOLE LIFE, STEVE COUNTS KAYAKING AS ONE OF HIS FAVORITE ACTIVITIES.
A MID-2017 STATUS REPORT ON K12HSN’S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

BY EDWIN W. SMITH

I have been involved with K12 technologies and working with K12 technologists for well over a decade and never have I seen so many great and needed professional development opportunities, thanks to the California Department of Education grant that launched K12HSN’s Technical Assistance and Professional Development (TAPD) initiative. If ever there was a time for K12 technologists and their managers to take advantage of the numerous no-cost TAPD training opportunities and resources to enhance existing knowledge and skill sets, now is the time to do so.

As project manager for the TAPD initiative, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide a detailed status report on the TAPD project. The successes the TAPD project has enjoyed to date can be attributed to K12HSN’s partnership with CETPA and to a dedicated project team of subject matter experts and course development consultants. The combined efforts will benefit CETPA’s membership, K12HSN and the entire K12 community in California.

Here is a summary of what the TAPD initiative has accomplished through the end of July and what is still under development and forthcoming.

BOOTCAMPS

Eighteen boot camp-style training events covering the topics of cybersecurity and wireless deployments have been completed. In addition, technology procurement and best practices training sessions have been delivered to some 475 IT professionals in nine different geographic locations. Additional boot camps are already being scheduled into 2018.

CONFERENCES

TAPD information and available resources have reached about 760 people via seven conferences held across the state. The TAPD project team is currently actively working with CETPA to present a full slate of breakout sessions at CETPA’s annual conference in Pasadena this November.

TECHNICAL TRAININGS

To date, 34 COE-hosted live training sessions and online technical trainings hosted by New Horizons Learning Group have resulted in more than 350 trained individuals in a variety of technical disciplines. Of 700 licenses procured from New Horizons Learning Group, 630 seats have been allocated. Between the live boot camps and technical training events, K12 technologists from 42 of California’s 58 counties have taken advantage of TAPD sponsored professional development opportunities.

CYBERSECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM (CEP)

The TAPD Cybersecurity Education Program (CEP) was designed to not only help meet the
needs of technical staff, but to address a key and often overlooked component, end-user training and security awareness. A total of 86 school district superintendents have made a commitment to support the CEP, 125 sentinels have been trained with a total of 6,444 enrolled end users. As of this writing, the total number of CEP participants exceeds 18,000. The CEP held its first annual Cybersecurity Summit on July 24 in Costa Mesa. Other aspects of the CEP include phishing attempts within participating districts to measure human factor issues, podcasts, webinars, resources for district Sentinels and a cybersecurity blog. The webinars are archived and made available on demand after airing, and include such topics as Two-Factor Authentication, Ransomware, Cloud Security, Securing Home Networks and the Internet of Things or IoT.

K12 NETWORK MONITORING SYSTEM (K12NMS)

One of the most exciting new developments is the recent announcement of the roll-out of K12HSN’s Network Monitoring System. Pilot testing for the network monitoring service was completed in July. This new service will allow districts to either utilize a download of the open source system and host their own service, or to provide access to K12HSN and authorize the K12HSN program to conduct the monitoring from its own servers.

Small- to medium-sized school districts can now request access to the new network monitoring and diagnostic tools allowing network managers to closely monitor their internal networks and diagnose network issues. The initial roll-out supports basic simple network management protocols (SNMP) with additional functionalities to follow soon. There is no cost for using this service. For additional information, contact the K12HSN team at (760) 312-6158 or at tapd@k12hsn.org.

FIREWALL TRAINING

Because of the importance of firewalls as a critical component of any secure network connection, the TAPD project team has recently been able to make arrangements with Fortinet and Palo Alto Networks to present one-day, boot camp-style training sessions covering the basics of firewall management and configuration. We have also procured a custom TAPD training session on Cisco ASA firewalls which will be presented by Knowledge Net. K12HSN’s Outreach team is in the process of identifying venues and scheduling dates for these trainings so if your County Office of Education or Regional CETPA group is interested in hosting one or more of these firewall focused training sessions, please contact the team at tapd@k12hsn.org.

REPOSITORY

The final element of the TAPD initiative is the development of a repository or reference library which will contain key white papers, technical standards, sample RFPs, best practices, tool kits, templates and similar documents available for download. We have started the process of identifying and procuring documents for the TAPD Repository. If you have any such references to share, please send them to tapd@k12hsn.org. Our Technical Advisory Council will help review and identify which documents should be included in the TAPD repository.

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

One area the TAPD program cannot ignore is Incident Response. Since schools are technology-rich environments, cyberattacks are commonplace these days. We are working with several companies to develop a one or two-day training session that addresses the network forensics as well as the business and related aspects of a data breach, ransomware demand or similar incident. We are targeting being able to offer incident response and related training starting in early 2018.

IN CONCLUSION

As you can see, K12HSN, CETPA and the entire TAPD project management team have been very busy developing the best and most useful technical assistance and professional development resources for California’s K12 community.

Finally, as many of you know, data collection and having evidence of the value and benefits of a grant are very important. If you or your school have benefited from a TAPD sponsored training event or service and you’re willing to share your testimonial, we’d love to hear from you! Please send your comments or questions to tapd@k12hsn.org.

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A major factor in moving California’s schools towards full implementation of both Common Core State Standards, and the new Smarter Balanced Assessments, is ensuring each school site has access to broadband internet. Unfortunately, despite California being the cradle of technological innovation, many of our school districts and school sites still struggle with implementing the necessary technological changes to ensure all students have access to the internet.

If California envisions a 21st-century education for all students, then ensuring adequate internet access at each school site should be of paramount importance to educators and policy makers. While updating the physical infrastructure of networks around the state is a necessary first step in this process, there is a larger, perhaps even more pressing issue casting a shadow over everything—net neutrality.

Net neutrality: What is it, and why is it important? Net neutrality is the idea that internet service providers (ISPs) are not allowed to play favorites when it comes to online services or websites. For example, in a net-neutral infrastructure, ISP-A has to allow all internet traffic to flow freely over their network, regardless of how big or small a website or service is, or how much traffic and revenue the website or service may generate. The same rules would apply to ISP-B, and ISP-C, all the way down the line.

Conversely, non-neutral infrastructures would allow ISPs to pick and choose what they favor. ISP-A might force small businesses to pay a surcharge to be granted equal access to their network. ISP-B might limit the amount of data a streaming service can use in a one-week period.

Why does this matter to schools and other K-12 education entities in California? If ISPs are allowed to force websites and online service providers to pay higher fees in order to receive enough bandwidth to provide their content, services that are vital to the operations of schools (educational video content, online instructional materials, cloud-based employee email, to name a few) could suffer serious bandwidth throttling, or cease to function altogether. It is also not far-fetched to think ISPs could start charging schools that host some of their own online services—a school website perhaps—to pay higher fees in order to remain online.

Why are net neutrality regulations currently under threat of repeal? The actual decisions over net neutrality will be made at the federal level. The regulations and rules which govern ISPs tend to fall under the purview of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

In 2015, the FCC released rules that classified high-speed internet as a telecommunications service, rather than an information one, subjecting providers to regulation under Title II of the Communications Act. While ISPs argued these new regulations were heavy-handed and would stifle investment in—and growth of—the internet, they ensured ISPs would not be allowed to block or interfere with any internet traffic on their networks.

However, at the recent Open Commission Meeting this past May, the FCC adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which would roll back much of the regulation imposed by the rules adopted in 2015. In an April 2017 interview on PBS’s The News Hour, newly-appointed FCC Chairman Ajit Pai echoed similar concerns ISPs raised in 2015, saying he favors a “free and open internet.” Continuing, he noted that, “by imposing heavy-handed economic regulations on internet service providers—big and small—we could end up disincentivizing companies from wanting to build out internet access to a lot of parts of the country, in low-income, urban and rural areas, for example.”

What is California doing in the fight over net neutrality? Assembly Joint Resolution 7 by Assembly Member Kevin Mullin is currently pending before the California State Senate and would urge the President and members of Congress to protect net neutrality and open internet access, and the E-rate program’s discounted telecommunication and internet access services for school and libraries. The bill also declares that the California Legislature views these issues as high priorities for the state and the country and opposes any federal efforts to rescind or block them. Several K-12 education groups have weighed in support of the measure, including CETPA, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), and the International Society for Technology in Education.

Additionally, State Attorney General Xavier Becerra publicly opposed the FCC’s proposed roll-back of the 2015 regulations, recently saying, “I vigorously oppose the FCC’s attempt to gut the net neutrality rules,” and that, “all consumers should have free, open and equal access to the internet. When internet service providers dictate the speed at which websites load, no one benefits but internet service providers. As the Attorney General of California, a state that’s home to countless start-ups and technology giants alike, I know that net neutrality rules represent freedom and opportunity, innovation and fairness. I urge the FCC to do what’s right and keep the net neutrality rules in place.”

What happens now? The window to submit comments to the FCC regarding the repeal of the 2015 regulations just closed on August 30. Reports have indicated that more than 22 million comments were submitted. The FCC will weigh those comments as it crafts a modified proposal. With the pressure on, it remains to be seen whether the Commission will go through with repealing the regulations, find a middle ground, or scrap the idea altogether. In the meantime, CETPA will join with California lawmakers to continue pressing the President and Congress to protect net neutrality.
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The times they are a changin’... and they continue to change, as technology ushers in yet another medium and a different tool that affects the way students and teachers communicate. The list of communication tools has grown and the need to make choices about which tools to use for students and teachers to communicate has become an important issue for us as educators to address.

The past is still with us

Face-to-face verbal communication continues to be a viable, although sometimes less convenient, way to communicate. Clearly it has the added benefit for integrating body language and voice intonation with the spoken word, which is usually lost in most technology-enhanced communication tools. However, the advent of a plethora of alternative ways to enhance communication between teacher and student has brought so many options to the K-12 environment, that to ignore, or to not utilize, the best tool for the job would be an oversight and significant missed opportunity for the educator.

Beyond the telephone

Real-time, or synchronous, communication continues to offer the significant advantage of immediate response or feedback, which is difficult to replace with asynchronous forms of communication. The use of Google Hangouts (https://hangouts.google.com), Skype (https://www.skype.com/en/), Apple’s FaceTime (https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204380), and other free video-conferencing tools has allowed for the next step in enhancing the phone call, by incorporating live video of one or multiple people in the conversation. Creating a meeting place outside the classroom where computer screens are shared can offer outstanding collaboration and communication opportunities for all involved.

Texting or messaging can be a synchronous tool that, although it does not easily integrate the subtleties available in a video call, can help maintain the real time tenor of a non face-to-face conversation. Remind (https://www.remind.com) and Arch The Way App (http://www.archtheway.com/) are applications designed for the K-12 teacher to assist in overcoming the challenges associated with regular text messaging. These apps help to create all class group messages while addressing the need to display only the name of the sender and not their phone number.

Communication, especially synchronous communication, requires that all participants have access to the needed tools to make the connection. 1-to-1 mobile devices provided to students on a 24/7 basis will enhance potential communication between teacher and student, if network connectivity is in place in the student’s home. The homework divide is omnipresent in many communities and needs to be addressed with urgency and expediency by assuring an Internet connection in all homes, which is as common as...
other utilities, such as water and electricity. There is increasing attention to the pending Federal Lifeline program (cue.tc/2eAUyZf), which soon may offer a discount on ISP service for low-income families.

THE OL’ STANDBY
One of the first and most popular digital asynchronous communication tools has been email. However, this tool has been identified by today’s youth as “so very 20th century!” Today’s students tend to choose other tools than email to address their need for communication. Email is frequently identified as a tool for grownups, and one that today’s K-12 student will only use when it is required by their “adult” teacher.

The use of robo calls home to families via services such as SchoolMessenger (http://www.schoolmessenger.com) will increase the one-way communication about school activities but overuse can quickly overwhelm parents to where calls are ignored more than noticed.

A web or blog site, such as WordPress (https://wordpress.com/), Blogger (https://www.blogger.com), Kidblog (http://kidblog.org/) and Edublogs (http://edublogs.org/), have the potential to enhance communication by offering tools to post announcements, highlight student achievements, disseminate resources, and assign group tasks. They employ the use of a primarily one-way portal where one party has information to share with another person or group.

DID YOU SEE WHAT HE SAID?
Asynchronous communication tools have great potential for enhancing student-teacher communication. The Google Docs suite of applications encourage collaboration and communication among all that use them. Google Doc (https://www.google.com/docs/about/), Google Slides (https://www.google.com.slides/about/), and Google Sheets, (https://www.google.com/sheets/about/) offer excellent venues to enhance communication within the curricular arena, by allowing for peer and teacher editing and making it as simple to read as it is to edit.

By soliciting feedback and information via a Google Forms (https://www.google.com/forms/about/), teachers and students can share insights and compile formative and summative data evaluations that rival previous options in both ease of creation and efficiency of use. A simple form that takes an educator 10 minutes to create can produce data from respondents that previously might not have been obtainable. Polling sites such as Poll Everywhere (https://www.polleverywhere.com) offer a simple way to collect data but tend to be less flexible than Google Forms.

LET’S GET SOCIAL!
Social media has brought an enhanced form of communication and, due to the enthusiastic adoption by today’s youth, these tools should be a key component to every educational communication strategy. Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/), due to its interactive and social nature, can be an excellent tool for distributing information and receiving feedback from your followers. “Friending” students (first check your district’s policies concerning teachers’ use of Facebook and how it relates to interacting with students) can help build a professional friendship based on increased knowledge of details that are specific to a teacher or student’s public life.

Twitter (https://twitter.com) is quickly becoming very popular in educational communities and effectively increases the educator and student’s Personal Learning Network. Many find Twitter to be their best source for both sharing and soliciting information relevant to their network of followers. Twitter requires the author to be succinct with their communication but the addition of links to images and resources goes a long way in enhancing the value of the shared information.

A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 TWEETS
With an Instagram (https://www.instagram.com) posting the author utilizes pictures, brief descriptions, and hashtags to tell their story. Communicating via images may not be as obvious to your audience as text, but it can certainly convey feelings and emotions in ways untouched by the average writer.

MANAGE THE LEARNING
There are many Learning Management Systems (LMS) on the market that have made blended and online learning extremely effective and interactive. Edmodo (https://www.edmodo.com), Schoology (https://www.schoology.com), and others offer an excellent venue for teacher-student communication about all aspects of the classroom curriculum. Educators that flip their classroom (cue.tc/2dE2gec) or incorporate screencasts (https://www.screencastify.com), Podcasts (cue.tc/2e0O0JE), and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com) need a location to house their digital resources. An LMS can be used to distribute and receive assignments, share resources, encourage collaboration, enhance communication, and ultimately improve learning.

There are many other tools that can assist with enhancing communication between teacher and student and more tools come into the educational arena daily. No matter which tools you choose to incorporate in your educational environment, be sure to be open to new and improved resources as they become available. Educators need to teach a variety of ways for students to learn and need to be lifelong learners themselves.
CETPA builds upon partnership opportunities that support its members and supporters in all California schools and districts

Beginning in August 2017, California Educational Technology Professionals Association (CETPA) announced a new affiliate partnership with the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), in collaboration and support of the interests and needs of state education agency leaders with respect to the use of technology for teaching, learning, and school operations across California schools.

The two organizations have demonstrated similar priorities in working together to bring out leadership, inspiration and empowerment of IT leaders in K-12 environments throughout the state, as part of a larger strategic initiative to build a future ready landscape and make innovative leaps in technology education. This new affiliate partnership opportunity also aims to enhance CETPA member benefits and enhance the way technology is adopted and implemented through IT leaders in districts and schools, and state education agencies.

“SETDA’s members are from all over the country and the partnership will bring a national perspective to CETPA members,” says Andrea Bennett, Executive Director for CETPA. “This partnership will support both organizations’ efforts to advance education through technology for all students.”

This new partnership is part of a 21st-century approach to education that is transforming schools in the state of California through the use of technology. The collaboration and support of local, regional and statewide leaders in the education community is critical to increase rates of student success and achievement. Successful partnerships require the involvement and contributions of education leaders and organizations like SETDA and CETPA who can ensure that IT professionals and decision makers in California’s EdTech community have the tools and support they need to execute on all levels and further the missions of both organizations.

The SETDA mission is to build and increase the capacity of state and national leaders to improve education through technology policy and practice. As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit membership association, SETDA was established by state education agency leaders in 2001 to serve, support and represent their emerging interests and needs with respect to the use of technology for teaching, learning, and school operations. To learn more about the SETDA, visit the website at: http://www.setda.org/
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California Groups Collaborate on Cybersecurity Education Program

BY RYAN JOHNSTON

This article originally appeared on EdScoop.com
A host of California governmental, industry and education partners have announced the joint creation of an educational cybersecurity organization known as the California Cyberhub.

The main point of contact is ca-cyberhub.org, a website intended to be a “virtual, nimble online community dedicated to developing the future workforce of ethical cybersecurity experts in California,” according to a news release. Multiple governmental, private sector and educational bodies supported Cyberhub’s creation, organizers said.

The website “is a collaborative forum and action site for all those entities to work together,” says Donna Woods, California Cyberhub developer and product specialist.

Ultimately, Woods told EdScoop, the impetus behind the organization and website was the need for collaboration and structure around the topic of cybersecurity within California’s vast systems of K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Woods also emphasized that other states should feel free to adopt the concept.

Cyberhub officials plan to use the website to offer cybersecurity-based educational resources, event calendars, news and planning resources for individuals or groups who want to explore cybersecurity.

“The California Cyberhub website provides educators at all levels the resources and tools to support students to train for and excel in a cybersecurity career pathway while having fun as they learn,” says Amy Tong, director and state CIO of the California Department of Technology.

California currently has around 45,000 unfilled cybersecurity jobs, a Cyberseek.org study found, and researchers only expect demand for cybersecurity professionals to rise in the coming years.

While the aim of the organization is to increase student engagement in and understanding of the field of cybersecurity, the website will serve a greater purpose, officials said.

“Indirectly, the site is aimed at administrators and facilitators of student-centered cybersecurity training and competitions,” says Steve Wright, director of ICT & digital media for California Community Colleges. “There has been a great deal of interest and many programs initiated for students ... so there was a need to establish a centralized support and sharing center. The combined goals are to increase the number of students, institutions and competitions in cybersecurity year over year.”

California Cybersecurity Innovation Challenge, held in June, is one such competition. Hosted by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, or GO-BIZ, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, the event included more than 100 students competing in cybersecurity-based challenges.

While students were competing, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Technology, the National Guard, the FBI, the Los Angeles Unified School District and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo drafted new training materials, online resources and cybersecurity career planning infrastructure so that colleges can hit the ground running with planning and development at the start of the fall semester, according to a news release.

Ryan Johnston is a contributing writer for Scoop News Group, parent of EdScoop.
ew, if any, K-12 school systems have the luxury of purchasing a complete IT infrastructure system all at once so that it’s perfectly integrated from the start.

Instead, most districts add IT components gradually as their budgets allow. During this slow build up, technology evolves, district leadership and staff change, and the district’s needs change. Even with careful management, IT infrastructure can become burdened with disparate systems, needlessly redundant functions, and shelfware. With less-than-careful management, IT systems can become many-headed monsters that keep district IT staffs in permanent firefighter mode running from flare-up to flare-up.

Sometimes the additional costs of dysfunctional IT architecture are apparent. For instance, it’s easy to see the additional cost of having staff members spend hours every week on repetitive, manual data entry because certain systems cannot exchange data automatically. However, many other costs aren’t so obvious. The true cost of disparate IT systems — in money and in time — can be challenging to measure. However, making the effort to uncover how your IT systems may be needlessly compromising cost-effectiveness and quality is valuable. It’s the first step in addressing the root causes of these hidden costs so you can make better decisions going forward.

**IT SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT: A LABYRINTH OF HIDDEN COSTS**

Even CIOs and other IT experts — not to mention superintendents and school boards — can easily get lost searching the labyrinth for IT expenses they can eliminate. Moreover, the search for savings becomes more difficult with IT architecture built mainly in silos that make integration difficult or even impossible. It’s easy to assess each silo independently, without looking deeply into the potential savings of more interactive platforms. Let’s take an aerial view into the maze and see where some IT budget beasts tend to hide:

**COMPLEX IMPLEMENTATIONS**

Adding anything from a simple application to an enterprise-level software suite to a fractured IT system will increase your implementation timeline and staffing requirements. Chances are, you’ll have to pay for outside expertise to integrate the new software and hardware.

It’s better to pay for the outside expertise when you need it than to risk a botched implementation. However, always ask for input during the implementation planning process about what your IT architecture might need to avoid extra expense for future upgrades or additions.

Even if you’re migrating to cloud-based services, which is increasingly where the K-12 world is heading, the integration with existing infrastructure doesn’t happen by itself. Until the barriers between your systems are removed, expect to pay more for every significant IT implementation.

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**Introduction:**

The Making of an IT System Monster

**EDITED BY DR. SALLY L’ANSON**

Read the full report and uncover additional hidden costs in IT systems management as well as back-office functions and the classroom. Visit [https://www.powerschool.com/whitepaper/the-hidden-costs-of-disparate-k-12-it-systems/](https://www.powerschool.com/whitepaper/the-hidden-costs-of-disparate-k-12-it-systems/)

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**DR. SALLY L’ANSON** is the director of customer education at PowerSchool. Before transitioning into her new position, Sally was the director of thought leadership for PowerSchool, where she collaborated with education leaders across the U.S., engaging with them in discussions on K-12 software innovations that build academic freedom and curiosity, reward ingenuity and fuel individual and team passion for excellence. Sally is a passionate educator with over 30 years experience in the education industry, taking on roles such as high school teacher and coach, founder and principal of a K-8 environmental education public charter school, analyst at the Massachusetts Department of Education, and more. Sally is a prolific writer and has written articles, ebooks, white papers and infographics on topics relevant to teachers, principals, school district leaders, and superintendents.
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Advancing Your Career with CoSN’s Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL®) Program

BY KEITH KRUEGER AND MARCI GIANG

The Consortium for School Networking, the national association of school district technology leaders, supports district technology leaders who are dedicated to continued growth in their capacity to improve students’ learning with innovative, digital environments. As technology becomes more ubiquitous in students’ lives, the role of education technology leaders has become more important and complex than ever. The greatest challenge we face around education technology is not technical or even technological. It is human.

CoSN is addressing this challenge by providing robust, thoughtful, and relevant professional advancement opportunities. This range from face-to-face events such as the Annual Conference and regional training events to virtual learning opportunities.

WHAT DOES A HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY LEADER NEED TO KNOW TODAY?

To answer that question, CoSN created a Framework of Essential Skills of the K-12 CTO. The Framework’s body of knowledge was built and updated by expert CTOs, and validated with support from the National Science Foundation. It defines 10 essential skills that can be grouped into three buckets: Managing Technology (the traditional role of CTOs); Understanding the Education Environment; and Leadership & Vision.

Three years ago, using the Framework body of knowledge, CoSN launched the Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL®) Program. This is the first-ever aspirational certification for education technology leaders. More than 300 education technology leaders, from large and small school systems nationwide, have passed this rigorous program and earned their certification with more in the pipeline.

Technology leaders can no longer be ‘in charge’ of all technology—some refer to this as the ‘consumerization’ of technology. Likewise, technology can no longer be a silo if it is to be effective. CTOs must see their job as using technology to enable the modern learning enterprise, not simply installing, maintaining and locking down the network. By becoming a CETL®, those who are credentialed demonstrate a commitment to that vision and have the skills to be an indispensable leader.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE CETL®?

District technology leaders often plan, implement, and manage technology programs and work collaboratively across departments. Their role has changed dramatically—from mainly being a technical position to a leadership one. CTOs collaborate with chief academic officers, chief financial officers, chief operating officers and others at the district level, as well as principals, teachers, parents/guardians and the school board. This person must have the leadership skills to effectively communicate and work with these various stakeholders.

CoSN has worked closely with superintendents and other district administrators to help them understand the value and importance of the CETL®. Superintendents who have encouraged CETL® certification have reported that:

• Stakeholders see that they are committed to the highest standards in administration.
• They hire and promote only the most skilled and knowledgeable education technologists.
• Their districts keep current on latest trends and best practices in education technology.
• Asking for CETL® demonstrates commitment to their employees’ professional growth.
• The technology team skills are well matched to the job requirements of their positions.

Furthermore, partnering with state departments of education and education service agencies has validated the CETL® as an important step in a successful education technology leader’s professional growth. For example, The Southwest Educational Development Center (SEDC), an educational service center located in Cedar City, Utah, received a grant from the Utah State Office of Education to help educational technology professionals in Utah prepare and earn the certification. The intent is to help Utah build its capacity by having new Utah CETL® certified leaders mentor and support a new cohort as they prepare for the CETL® certification exam.
SOME FEEDBACK FROM THIS FIRST COHORT OF UTAH CETL®S INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

“CETL® certifications came at a critical time in Utah, as our state legislators continue to wrestle with how to best fund the infrastructure needs for one-to-one as a state. CETL®s have added support and credibility to the excellent group of technologists in districts around the state and the CETL® framework has enhanced our conversations about best practices when implementing one-to-one. CETL® certification has been affirming and empowering for all who have participated in seeking this distinction. With this credential in hand, technology directors, CTOs, and CIOs around the state have reasserted their places at the table in discussing the role of technology in education.”

— DAVE LONG, LOGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT’S DIRECTOR FOR TECHNOLOGY

“How do I prepare for the CETL®?

Many K-12 educational technology organizations provide quality professional development resources for CTOs. An example is the CETPA Mentor Program, which aligns with CoSN’s mission of supporting technology leaders’ capacity in implementing successful technology programs. California leaders have indicated that participating in the Mentor Program have helped them prepare and pass the CETL® exam. Thus, the CETPA Mentor Program builds upon the national CETL® certification, and we encourage all Mentor Program alumni to consider this national certification.

CoSN is committed to helping district leaders customize their learning experience by offering a variety of professional advancement opportunities. In addition to a suite of online courses focusing on different areas of EdTech, we developed the CETL® Foundation Course which covers the fundamental elements of the Framework. The course was recently modernized with new online assessments and up-to-date resources, can be taken as self-study or facilitated, and is offered three times a year to meet the needs of busy professionals.

Other tools available free to district leaders include CoSN’s Empowered Superintendents Toolkit—a set of tools designed to build a school district’s team leadership capacity. Partnering with AASA, the School Superintendents Association, the purpose of the toolkit is to help superintendents and technology leaders improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence in leading a digital transformation. It includes the following components:

1) Module 1: Five Imperatives for Technology Leadership addresses the recent changes across the education landscape covering key themes, or “imperatives,” of sustainable technology leadership. Two related tools, “Self-Assessment for Superintendents” and the “District Leadership Team Assessment,” are aimed at helping district leaders to evaluate their progress toward becoming effective technology leaders.

2) Module 2: Four Action Steps for Strengthening the Technology Leadership Team helps administrators build a strong relationship with a highly-qualified chief technology officer and foster a team approach to technology leadership.

3) An expanded set of tools to strengthen technology leadership includes a performance rubric for evaluating CTOs, sample CTO job descriptions, and questions for interviews.

Please visit www.CoSn.org. The Consortium for School Networking for more resources to help you in your work and as you advance your career as a school technology leader.

“Some state legislators have wondered about the technology staff qualifications in public education around the state. The CETL® certification, with its excellent framework and its rigorous certification process, provides a resounding and certified answer of “very qualified.”

— KATHLEEN WEBB, PRINCIPAL OF THE UTAH ELECTRONIC HIGH SCHOOL

KEITH R. KRUEGER IS CEO OF COSN, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES AS THE VOICE FOR K-12 SCHOOL SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY LEADERS IN NORTH AMERICA. COSN’S MISSION IS TO EMPOWER EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO REALIZE ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS. KEITH@COSN.ORG.

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